Critique-

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Year 9 and 10 History Package: Post-1975 migration to Australia

The package that I looked at was the Year 10 History package which focused on post-1975 migration to Australia. The information which was provided was very detailed and comprehensive, with a lot of examples that would assist all teachers, not only pre-service teachers. The package was appropriate for the age group, specifically because it had explicit links to the Australian Curriculum for year 10. It clearly outlined the knowledge which the students would gain, while also describing the skills that year 10 should be demonstrating and developing, such as understanding chronology, historical terms and concepts, identifying and analysing sources, using ICT for research, communicating effectively and identifying differing perspectives and interpretations.

The package also provides very clear and easily accessible resources. Firstly, the example lesson plan would be an important resource for teachers as it identifies exactly what the lesson would involve, and how the use of ICT would be implemented throughout. The outline of all of the lessons is also beneficial as it shows the order which should be taken when teaching the topic and how ICT can be incorporated. Resources, such as books, primary sources and websites are provided, and are helpful for the pre-service teacher as they offer a range of information on topics such as migration to Australia and digital literacy, which can be used by the teacher as well as the students in the classroom.

Other resources, such as the ICT resources and in particular the tutorials for the various programs like Wiki and Cacoo, are effective as they assist the teacher in firstly understanding how to use the technology. Once the teacher has knowledge of the program, they are then able to implement it effectively into their lessons. Thus, the teacher can then decide how helpful the ICT would be for teaching and learning.

The package therefore demonstrates clearly how to teach effectively with ICT. It provides information on the ICT, and then outlines the strategies that teachers should use when implementing it. For example, the package highlights the importance of modelling and explaining both the historical and ICT skills students will need to develop. The package also provides a number of teaching strategies that can be used in the classroom by the pre-service teacher, such as the use of scaffolding to assist students in developing their internet research skills, as well as independent and collaborative learning. Furthermore, particular information is presented in the package which centres on the potential of technology in assisting and developing deeper learning. The package reinforces the importance of students gaining higher-order thinking skills when using ICT. For example, this is seen in the lesson in which students are introduced to digital archives and where they are required to analyse the historical documents in terms of reliability and usefulness, and not simply use as a source of information on the topic they are studying. Using ICT, such as a wiki, enables students to learn deeply as they are employing a range of skills in order to create it, and are in turn becoming active learners rather than passive ones.

Therefore, the package is a great resource for pre-service teachers as it enables them to become familiar with effectively using ICT in the classroom, developing student knowledge and skills, and promoting deeper learning.